I claim:

1	1.	A method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine
2	usage, comprising the steps of:
3	providing a database of information pertaining to machines to be monitored
4	and biometric characteristics of a group of users of the machines;
5	providing the machines to be monitored with mechanisms for determining
6	biometric characteristics of users of the machines during usages of the machines;
7	employing a communications mechanism to transmit the biometric
8	characteristics of the users of the machines, and machine usage information associated
9	with the usages of the machines, to a processor which has access to the database of
10	information; and
11	employing the processor to process the biometric characteristics of the users of
12	the machines, the machine usage information, and information from the database to
13	determine amounts to be allocated for the usages of the machines.

1	2.	The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine
2	usage of claim 1, wherein:
3	the database also includes information associating the users of the machines
4	with one or more accounts.

1	3.	The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine
2	usage of claim 2, further comprising the step of:
3	assigning the amounts to the one or more accounts depending upon the
4	biometric characteristics of the users of the machines, the machine usage information,
5	and/or the information from the database.

1	4.	The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine
2	usage of claim 2, wherein:
3	the one or more accounts include a business account associated with at least
4	one of the users of the machines.

1	5.	The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2   usage of claim 2, wherein:

3   the one or more accounts include a personal account of one of the users of the

4   machines.

1   6.   The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2   usage of claim 1, wherein:

3   the database also includes information pertaining to machine usage

4   authorizations and/or limitations, if any, for the users of the machines.

1   7.   The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2   usage of claim 1, wherein:

3   the biometric characteristics include physiological traits.

1   8.   The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2   usage of claim 7, wherein:

3   the physiological traits include fingerprints.

1   9.   The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2   usage of claim 1, wherein:

3   the biometric characteristics include behavioral traits.

1   10.   The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2   usage of claim 1, wherein:

3   the communications mechanism comprises a network.

1   11.   A method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2   usage, comprising the step of:

3   transmitting machine usage information and biometric characteristic

4   information of a user of a machine to a processing center which includes a processor

5   configured to process the machine usage information and to allocate a machine usage

6   charge depending upon the biometric characteristic information.

1   12.   A method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2 usage, comprising the steps of:

3   employing a biometric characteristic determining mechanism to acquire a

4 biometric characteristic of a user of a machine during a usage of the machine by the

5 user; and

6   processing information pertaining to the usage of the machine and the

7 biometric characteristic to determine a machine usage charge.

1   13.   The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2 usage of claim 12, further comprising the step of:

3   allocating the machine usage charge to an account associated with the user of

4 the machine.

1   14.   The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2 usage of claim 12, wherein:

3   the machine comprises a printer.

1   15.   The method for using biometric characteristics to monitor machine

2 usage of claim 12, wherein:

3   the machine comprises a photocopier.

1   16.   A processing system for using biometric characteristics to monitor

2 machine usage, comprising:

3   a processor configured to process machine usage information to determine a

4 machine usage charge and to allocate the machine usage charge depending upon

5 biometric characteristic information associated with the machine usage information.

1   17.   The processing system for using biometric characteristics to monitor

2 machine usage of claim 16, wherein:

3   the processor is configured to allocate the machine usage charge to one or

4 more of a plurality of accounts depending upon a location of a machine that was used.

1   18.   The processing system for using biometric characteristics to monitor

2 machine usage of claim 16, wherein:

3   the processor is configured to allocate the machine usage charge to one or

4   more of a plurality of accounts depending upon a time that a machine was used.

1   19.   The processing system for using biometric characteristics to monitor

2   machine usage of claim 16, wherein:

3   the processor is configured to allocate the machine usage charge to one or

4   more of a plurality of accounts depending upon whether a usage of a machine was

5   authorized.